

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. 1. A computer system allowing for modification of the original boot block, comprising:
 - 2 a microprocessor;
 - 3 startup memory coupled to the microprocessor, wherein the startup memory is available on power up of the system; and
 - 5 an original boot block stored in the startup memory, wherein the original boot block checks for a secondary boot block.
- 1 2. The computer system of claim 1 wherein the original boot block checks for a secondary boot block stored in the startup memory.
- 1 3. The computer system of claim 1 wherein the original boot block checks for a secondary boot block at a specific memory address.
- 1 4. The computer system of claim 1 wherein the original boot block checks for a secondary boot block by comparing data at specific memory addresses to verification data.
- 1 5. The computer system of claim 1 wherein the original boot block checks for a secondary boot block by performing a checksum of specific memory addresses.
- 1 6. The computer system of claim 1 wherein the original boot block checks the integrity of a secondary boot block by performing a checksum of specific memory addresses.

1 7. The computer system of claim 1 wherein the original boot block only performs mandatory
2 initialization functions before checking for a secondary boot block.

1 8. The computer system of claim 1 wherein the original boot block is protected from
2 modification.

1 9. The computer system of claim 1 wherein when a secondary boot block is found in a portion
2 of the startup memory that portion of memory is protected from modification.

1 10. A method of allowing for modification of the original boot block in a computer system,
2 comprising:

3 powering up a computer system having startup memory;
4 accessing an original boot block in startup memory to initialize the system; and
5 checking for a secondary boot block.

1 11. The method of claim 10 comprising checking for a secondary boot block stored in the
2 startup memory.

1 12. The method of claim 10 comprising checking for a secondary boot block at a specific
2 memory address.

1 13. The method of claim 10 wherein checking for a secondary boot block comprises comparing
2 data at specific memory addresses to verification data.

1 14. The method of claim 10 wherein checking for a secondary boot block comprises
2 performing a checksum of specific memory addresses.

1 15. The method of claim 10 further comprising checking the integrity of a secondary boot
2 block by performing a checksum of specific memory addresses.

1 16. The method of claim 10 wherein the original boot block performs the checking for a
2 secondary boot block.

1 17. The method of claim 16 wherein only mandatory initialization functions are performed by
2 the boot block before checking for a secondary boot block.

1 18. The method of claim 16 wherein the original boot block is protected from modification.

1 19. The method of claim 10 further comprising protecting a portion of startup memory from
2 inadvertent modification during system operation when a secondary boot block is found in that
3 portion of the memory.

1 20. A computer system allowing for modification of the original boot block, comprising:
2 a power supply providing system power;

3 a microprocessor coupled to the power supply;

4 startup memory coupled to the microprocessor, wherein the startup memory is available on

5 power up of the system; and

6 an original boot block stored in the startup memory, wherein the original boot block checks

7 for a secondary boot block.